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A GLANCE AT THE EVILS OF WAR.

From a recent life of Wallenstein, we quote a brief sketch of the atrocities and horrors connected with "*the thirty years' war*," which closed near the middle of the seventeenth century; and the reader will bear in mind, that it was prosecuted as a *religious* war between the professed followers of the same Prince of peace; and that Christians in almost every country in Europe were required by law to pray for its success on both sides!

"Thirty years of war, carried on, not with the surplus population and resources of the country, but with its very capital and substance, had brought the empire to the verge of ruin and barbarism; and the pictures of desolation handed down to us by writers and chroniclers of the period are absolutely frightful to contemplate.

Of all the commanders who appeared during the war, Gustavus Adolphus was alone able to preserve in his army a strict and humane system of discipline. In most armies, the mercenary soldiers, irregularly paid and worse supplied, were obliged to tear by force from the citizens and peasants the means of subsistence. The country people resisted wherever they were strongest; acts of violence followed; the peasantry slew and in Catholic countries tortured straggling soldiers and attacked even small detached parties. The military avenged their comrades, neglecting too often to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty, till ruin and devastation tracked at last the progress of every march.

The war was carried on without plan or system. Expeditions were undertaken, apparently with no other view than to desolate hostile provinces; and in the end, provisions and winter quarters formed the principal objects of the summer campaigns. Want, sickness, distress, and the total absence of discipline, by which these evils were fearfully augmented, when not created, destroyed far more troops than the sword, and entire armies were swept away before they had even seen an enemy. Soldiers left the ranks singly or in bands, as it suited them, and generally took to plundering; in 1642 the whole of Marshall Gubriant's army dispersed itself and broke into robber hordes that committed the most fearful depredations.

The enormities charged against the French troops of the period are equal to those charged even against the Croats; but it must be recollected that Gubriant's army was, in fact, the remains of the army which had been raised by the Duke of Weimar; and was composed of adventurers from all countries. It must also be observed, that the French soldiers of the early part of the seventeenth century, were in a great proportion vagrants and vagabonds, taken up as bad

subjects by the police, and sent to the army, either because troops were wanted, or because the individuals pressed could give no satisfactory account of themselves. These men resembled in nothing the French soldiers of Louis XIV, and his successors; still less did they resemble the soldiers of the empire, and least of all the soldiers of the republic. The imperial and republican soldiers were the best men France could produce: it was their gallantry and intelligence which made the reputation of their leaders; and atoned, on countless occasions, for the ignorance and incapacity of their crowned and laureled chief. Sometimes these gallant soldiers did even more, and made up, by humanity and good conduct, for a system of war introduced by unprincipled governments, and commanders, and naturally fraught with every species of crime and disorder.

Whether arts, sciences, learning and civilization lost or gained by the thirty years' war, is a question not very easily decided, though historians mostly assert that Europe was thrown back for a century by its ruinous consequences. In many parts of Germany learning was no doubt retarded; in others it was altogether swept away, along with the population. An entire generation who would not, in general, prove the best citizens, also grew up amid scenes of strife, licentiousness, and the uncertainty of the morrow. But the amount of knowledge existing could not be destroyed; and thousands of learned, able, and industrious Germans emigrated and carried along with them, into other and less enlightened countries, the arts and knowledge, for which their own was already distinguished. The Danes, Swedes, Poles, and Scots, who fought in Germany, there came in contact with a state of civilization superior to what existed in their own countries; and along with much unworthy spoil, some fair and honorable booty would at least be carried home by the military adventurers. As good sometimes results from evil, the unworthy plunder may at times have produced beneficial effects. The Swedes, in imitation of Maximilian, who had sent the Heidelberg library to Rome, sent libraries, paintings, statues, and works of art to Sweden, where, owing to the scarcity of such treasures, they could hardly fail to create some taste for learning, literature, and refinement.

It was to the pressure and hardness of the times, however, that Europe owed the progress which it made: the iron time forced upon men an excess of mental exertion that produced far nobler fruit than any likely to have arisen during the calm reign of ordinary peace. And the young Germany which grew up from the thirty years' war, was already many generations in advance of the Germany that witnessed the first outbursting of the great Bohemian volcano.

But whatever advantage Europe may have gained by the contest Germany purchased its share of the benefit at a fearful price. Law, justice, equity,—in many places all the decencies of life,—had entirely vanished from a land in which force alone wielded the arbitrary sceptre of command. The country is said to have lost twelve millions of inhabitants by the contest; and the population, which amounted to sixteen millions, when the troubles first broke out, counted hardly more than four millions when the war closed. Though this statement may, perhaps, be exaggerated, it seems pretty

well ascertained that the population of the Duchy of Wirtenberg was reduced from half a million to forty-eight thousand; that of Bohemia had already been reduced from three millions, to eight hundred and ninety thousand before the death of Ferdinand II; Saxony and Brunswick suffered in the same proportion.

In the Electorate of Hesse, seventeen towns, forty-seven castles, and three hundred villages had been burnt to the ground. In the Duchy of Wirtenberg, eight towns, forty-five villages, thirty-six thousand houses, had been laid in ashes, and seventy thousand hearth fires completely extinguished: seven churches and four hundred and forty-four houses, had been burned at Eichsted. Many towns that had escaped destruction were almost depopulated: three hundred houses stood empty at Nordheim; more than two hundred had been pulled down at Gottingen, merely to serve for fuel. The wealthy city of Augsburg, which contained eighty thousand inhabitants before the war, had only eighteen thousand left when it closed: this town, like many others, has never recovered its former prosperity. No less than thirty thousand villages and hamlets are said to have been destroyed: in many others the population had entirely died out, and the unburied corpses of the last victims of violence or disease, were left exposed about the streets or fields, to be mangled and torn to pieces by birds and beasts of prey.

In the last campaign of the war, the French and Swedes burned no less than a hundred villages in Bavaria alone; and the skulls of St. Cosmas and St. Damianus had to be sent from Bremen to Munich, in order to console Maximilian for the ruin he had brought over his beautiful country. But even these pitiable relics failed to allay the fears of the unhappy Elector: the share which he had taken in bringing about this desolating contest, pressed heavily on the latter years of his life. In vain he prayed and fasted: the dreadful future was constantly before his sight, and the once valiant soldier and ambitious prince died at last a trembling and despairing bigot.

The crimes and cruelties of which the troops were frequently guilty would appear almost incredible, were they not attested in a manner to render doubt altogether impossible. But independent of private accounts, we have various reports from the authorities of towns, villages, and provinces, complaining of the atrocities committed by the lawless soldiery. Peaceful peasants were hunted for mere sport, like the beasts of the forest; citizens were nailed up against doors and walls, and fired at like targets; while horsemen and Croats tried their skill at striking off the heads of young children at a blow. Ears and noses were cut off; eyes were scooped out, and the most horrible tortures contrived to extract money from the sufferers, or to make them disclose where property was concealed. Women were exposed to every species of indignity; they were collected in bands, and driven, like slaves, into the camps of the ruffian soldiery and men had to fly from their homes to escape witnessing the dishonor to which their wives and daughters were subjected.

Houses and villages were burnt out of mere wantonness, and the wretched inhabitants too often forced into the flames, to be consumed along with their dwellings. Amid these scenes of horror,

intemperance, dissipation, and profligacy were carried to the highest pitch. Intoxication frequently prevented the Austrian General Goltz from giving out the countersign; and General Banner was, on one occasion, so drunk for four days together, that he could not receive the French ambassador, Beauregard, who had an important message to deliver. "Such was the state of triumphant crime," says a writer of the period, "that many, driven to despair, denied even the existence of a Deity, declaring that if there were a God in heaven, he would not fail to destroy with thunder and lightning, a world of sin and wickedness."

The peasants, expelled from their homes, enlisted with the oppressors, in order to inflict upon others the sufferings which they had themselves been made to endure. The fields were allowed to run waste, and the absence of industry on one side, added to destruction on the other, soon produced famine, which, as usual, brought infections and pestilential diseases in its train. In 1635, there were not hands enough left at Schweidnitz to bury the dead, and the town of Ohlau had lost its last citizen. Want augmented crime, even where an increase was thought impossible. In many places hunger had overcome all repugnance to human flesh, and the tales of cannibalism handed down to us are of far too horrible a nature to be here repeated.

The cup of human suffering was full even to overflowing, and the very aspect of the land was undergoing a rapid change. Forests sprung up during the contest, and covered entire districts, which had been in full cultivation before the war; and wolves, and other beasts of prey took possession of the deserted haunts of men. This was particularly the case in Brunswick, Brandenburg, and Pomerania, where heaps of ashes in the midst of wildernesses served long afterwards to mark the spots where peace and civilization had once flourished. In many parts of the country, the ruins of castles and stately edifices still attest the fury with which the war was carried on; and on such spots tradition generally points out the surrounding forests, as occupying the sites of fertile fields, whence the lordly owners of the mansions derived food and subsistence for themselves and their numerous retainers."

PRIZE ESSAYS ON A CONGRESS OF NATIONS.

Prize Essays on a Congress of Nations for the adjustment of international disputes, and for the promotion of universal peace, without resort to arms; together with a Sixth Essay, comprising the substance of the Rejected Essays. Boston: Whipple & Damrell, for the American Peace Society. 1840. pp. 700.

The history of this volume is rather long and complicated. The American Peace Society, at its first annual meeting in 1829, offered, through one of its distinguished friends, a premium